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The Tagalog Ligature and Analogies in other Languages.—

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IN those languages with which we are most familiar, the languages of the Indo-European and Semitic families of speech, words that stand to each other in the relation of modifier and modified, as, for example, noun and adjective, require no exterior element to show this relation. The concord in ending, as in *equus candidus*, or the position, as in *cheval blanc*, is quite sufficient for this purpose.

In Tagalog, however, as in the Philippine languages in general, words that stand in the relation of modifier and modified are usually joined together by certain particles, which form a distinct part of speech.¹ For example, a Tagalog, instead of saying for 'good man' *mabúti táwo* with immediate juxtaposition of the adjective and noun, says *mabúti-ng táwo* or *táwo-ng mabúti* with a connective particle, the guttural nasal *ng* between the two.

For particles like this *ng* we may employ the term 'ligature,' translating the Spanish term *ligazon*.

This ligature has in Tagalog a triple form, viz., *na*, *-ng*, *-n*. *Na* is used regularly after a word ending in a consonant (though it may also be used after one ending in a vowel), e. g., for 'strong man' we have *malakás na táwo* where *na* is used after the consonantal ending of the adjective *malakás* 'strong.' The particle *ng* is used after a word ending in a vowel or *n*, e. g., *mabúti-ng táwo* 'good man,' where the guttural nasal is used after the vocalic ending of the adjective *mabúti* 'good'; and *báyang malakí* 'large town,' where the final *n* of *báyan* 'town' coalesces with the guttural nasal of the ligature giving *báyang*.² The particle *n* is sometimes used instead of the

¹ Cf. my first series of *Contributions to Comparative Philippine Grammar*, JAOS., Vol. xxvii, 1906, p. 325 f.

² The statement is usually made in the various Tagalog grammars that *g* is the ligature in this last case, but this view has of course no phonetic basis, there being no *g* sound in such endings, the letter *g* being simply a part of the digraph *ng* representing the guttural nasal.

particle *ng*, e. g., 'Spanish shirt' may be expressed by either *báro-ng kastíla* or *báro-n kastíla*. The difference between the forms *ng* and *n* is perhaps dialectic; it is the same difference as we have in English between the elegant and the colloquial pronunciations of the present participle in *ing*, e. g., 'doing' and 'doin.' These connective particles have the greatest variety of uses, but the principle underlying their use is practically always the same, viz., that the two elements joined must stand to each other in the relation of modifier and modified.

The cases in which the ligature is used fall into two general classes, viz.—*a*) cases in which it is employed to join words and phrases; *b*) cases in which it is employed to join sentences. I shall not attempt to trace in detail all the complicated uses of the ligature, but will confine myself to some of the most striking cases.

The most important of the words and phrases joined by the ligature are the following, viz.—*a*) the noun and its adjective, which construction is exemplified in *mabúti-ng táwo* 'good man': *b*) a noun and a following noun modifying the first as a genitive, e. g., *ang báhay na bató* 'the house of stone,' the ligature *na* standing between *báhay* 'house' and its modifier *bató* 'stone': *c*) an adjective or adverb and an adverbial modifier, e. g., *lubhá-ng mabúti* 'very good,' the adverb *lubhá*² 'very,' which modifies the adjective *mabúti*, being followed by the ligature: *d*) a verb and an adverbial modifier, e. g., *bágo-ng ginawá* 'just, newly made,' the ligature being used between the verb *ginawá* 'was made' and the adverb *bágo* 'newly, just': *e*) the particles that express the idea of 'to have, to possess,' viz., *may* and *walá* and their object 'the thing possessed,' e. g., *mayroón siyá-ng salapí* 'he has money,' the ligature *ng* being used between the word for money *salapí* and the word immediately preceding it; (here the ligature seems to have about the force of a partitive article like French

¹ The popular idea that the people who say 'doin' drop their *g*'s is of course incorrect, the guttural nasal represented by the digraph *ng* being in this case simply changed to the dental nasal.

² The circumflex accent is used with an accented final vowel to denote that it is followed by the glottal catch. When a final vowel of this character is followed by the ligature, the glottal catch is lost, and the accent is indicated simply by the acute accent mark.

du, since *may* and *walá* are used only when the object is something indefinite): *f*) the interrogative pronouns and following verb; in Tagalog the interrogative pronouns are not used as subjects of verb; for example, a Tagalog does not say 'who did it?' 'but who is the one that did it'? *síno ang gungmawá*, 'who' *síno* being treated as predicate, to the following clause 'the one that did it' *ang gungmawá*, consisting of the verb *gungmawá* preceded by the article *ang*; instead of this article *ang*, which is equivalent to a compound relative 'the one that,' Tagalog may employ the ligature, e. g., *síno-ng gungmawá* for *síno ang gungmawá*.

The ligature is also used to join two sentences together, the sentence after the ligature being usually an adjective or noun clause. For example, 'I received the letter that you sent' is rendered as follows: *tinanggáp ko ang súlat* ('I received the letter') *na* (the ligature = 'that') *ipinadalá mo sa ákin* ('you sent me'), the two clauses 'I received the letter' and 'you sent me' being joined by the ligature *na*.

The most original of these various functions of the ligature was probably that of joining together a noun and a modifying adjective element, and its use in joining an adjective clause, i. e., as relative pronoun, is perhaps more original than its use in joining single words. From its use between noun and adjective was doubtless developed the idea that the particle was the proper element to show the connection between any two words or elements that stood in the relation of modifier and modified, so that it was used not only between noun and adjective, but also between adjective and adverb, between verb and adverb, etc.

The ligature after the particles indicating possession, viz., *may* and *walá*, and after the interrogative pronouns, seems to be the simple relative used with the force of the compound relative *ang*. For example, in the sentence *mayroón akó-ng salapí* 'I have some money,' the ligature + the noun *salapí* means practically 'what is money'? and in the sentence *síno-ng gungmawá* 'who did it?' we have seen that the ligature + verb is equivalent to the article *ang* + the verb (cf. above).

While the use of these connective particles or ligatures appears most prominently in the Philippine Languages, forming one of

¹ The compound relative is regularly expressed by the article *ang*.

their most salient characteristics, it is interesting to note that the use of such particles is not confined to these languages, but is found to some extent in languages of both the Indo-European and Semitic families of speech. The connective particles are here, as in the Philippine Languages, either identical with or closely connected with the relative pronouns. The language which presents the closest analogy to the Philippine languages in this respect is Modern Persian, an Indo-European idiom descended from some sister dialect of the language of the Avesta. Here a particle *i* derived from the ancient relative *hya*¹ corresponds to the Tagalog guttural nasal; for example, 'pure water' is not simply *áb pák*, but *áb-i pák*; 'male lion' is not simply *Šír nār*, but *šír-i nār*. This particle *i* is also regularly used to indicate the genitive, e. g., *táj-i zār* 'crown of gold.' In several of the Semitic languages, viz., Assyrian, Aramaic, and Ethiopic, the relative pronoun is employed in a similar way, principally as a sign of the genitive,² e. g., 'the man's wife' is in Assyrian *aššatu ša ameli*, in Syriac ܐܬܬܐܬܐ ܕܥܡܝܐ *attē^h á de gabrá*, in Ethiopic ፡ሰ፡ሰ፡ሰ፡ ፡ሰ፡ሰ፡ሰ፡ ፡ *bē'ēsūt za-bē'ēsī*, the relatives *ša*, *de* and *za* being practically equivalent to the English preposition 'of,' and corresponding to the Tagalog ligature in such phrases as *baháy na bató* 'house of stone.' In Ethiopic, however, *za* may also be used before an adjective that modifies a noun, e. g., ፡ሰ፡ሰ፡ሰ፡ ፡ ፡ሰ፡ሰ፡ሰ፡ ፡ *za-qadāmī šer'atā* 'his previous station,' the relative *za* being used before the adjective *qadāmī* 'previous, former' which modifies *šer'atā* 'his station.'

There are also analogies in Egyptian and Coptic, which according to the latest researches belong to the Semitic family of speech.³ The genitive in both languages is often indicated by a particle *n*, a demonstrative element from which the Old Egyptian relative is probably derived,⁴ and in Coptic this particle *n* is often used between noun and adjective just like the

¹ Cf. Salemann u. Shukovski, *Persische Grammatik*, Berlin, 1889, § 16, p. 30 ff.

² Cf. Delitzsch, *Assyrische Grammatik*, Berlin, 1889, § 123, 2; Nöldeke *Kurzgefasste Syrische Grammatik*, Leipzig, 1898, § 205, B; Dillmann-Bezold, *Grammatik der Äthiopischen Sprache*, Leipzig, 1899, § 186.

³ Cf. Erman, *Ägyptische Grammatik*, 2^{te} Aufl., Berlin, 1902, § 1.

⁴ Cf. Erman, *op. cit.* §§ 137-139, 425.

ligature in Tagalog,¹ e. g., 'a weak man' is either **ΟΥ-ΡΩΜΕ Ν-ΕΩΒ** *ou-róme 'n-ěób* or **ΟΥ-ΕΩΒ Ν-ΡΩΜΕ** *ou-ěób 'n-róme*, the particle *n* in both cases standing between noun and adjective just as the ligature *ng* stands in Tagalog in *táwo-ng mabúti* or *mabúti-ng táwo* 'good man.'

The use of these connective particles, then, in all these languages is to be regarded simply as an extension of the use of the relative pronoun. While it is found in its highest development in the Philippine languages, certain other languages, notably Modern Persian and Coptic, have also made considerable advances in the same direction. Generally speaking, the human mind is the same the world over, and linguistic phenomena that are found in one family of speech may be expected to recur in other families. But the fact that, as here, these phenomena often reach their highest development in obscurer forms of speech, shows the importance of some knowledge of those languages that stand outside of the beaten path of linguistic study.

¹ Cf. Steindoff, *Koptische Grammatik*, 2^{te} Aufl. Berlin, 1904, §§ 164-166.